

NCEA Review and Maintenance Programme – 2026 updates

Review and maintenance work has been undertaken for all three levels of NZC NCEA for 2026. This pdf document contains the updated Achievement Standards for **Social Studies Level 3**. In January 2026 the NCEA website will be updated with these changes for Level 1, and the pdf version will be removed as it will no longer be necessary. For Levels 2 and 3, NZQA will update their website with the registered standards in December. For external assessment specifications, refer to the NZQA website.

Subject: Social Studies Level 3

Standard	What's changed?
AS 3.2 91597	Explanatory Note 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none">updated to tighten the focus on the competency of Social Inquiry and to lift language to appropriate levelling.
AS 3.5 91600	Explanatory Note 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none">updated to tighten the focus on social action. 'Perspectives' removed.

Achievement Standard**Subject Reference** Social Studies 3.2**Title** Conduct a critical social inquiry**Level** 3**Credits** 6**Assessment** Internal**Subfield** Social Science Studies**Domain** Social Studies**Status** Registered**Status date** September 2025**Planned review date** December 2028**Date version published** December 2025

This achievement standard involves conducting a critical social inquiry.

Achievement Criteria

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a critical social inquiry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a critical social inquiry in depth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a critical social inquiry comprehensively.

Explanatory Notes

- This achievement standard is derived from the Social Studies achievement objectives from Level 8 of the Social Sciences learning area of *The New Zealand Curriculum*, Learning Media, Ministry of Education, 2007, and is related to material in the *Teaching and Learning Guide for Senior Social Studies*, Ministry of Education, 2010 at <http://seniorsecondary.tki.org.nz/>.

This standard is also derived from *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*. For details of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* achievement objectives to which this standard relates, see the [Papa Whakaako](#) for the relevant learning area.

- Conduct a critical social inquiry* involves using social studies concepts and giving specific evidence, and involves:
 - deciding on the focus for the inquiry and developing research questions
 - gathering information and background ideas
 - explaining people's points of view, values and perspectives that underpin their participation and/or action in society and how these relate to the focus of the inquiry
 - reporting the findings and their relationship to the focus of the social inquiry
 - evaluating the processes of social inquiry in relation to the findings, including making suggestions for improvement.

- D] *Conduct a critical social inquiry in depth* involves analysing by comparing and contrasting points of view, values and perspectives that relate to the focus of the inquiry.

Conduct a critical social inquiry comprehensively involves critically evaluating the findings and considering the implications of the findings in contexts outside the inquiry.

- 3 Evaluation involves weighing up strengths and weaknesses.
 - Evaluating the process may include critiquing the primary and secondary sources used and evaluating their potential for bias and inaccuracies; considering possible ethical issues relating to the inquiry; and reflecting on how the process may have influenced the findings. This may also include suggesting areas for improvement, extension, and/or follow-up.
 - Critically evaluating the findings may include critiquing their validity, relevance, significance.
- 4 Findings can be reported using written, oral, or audio-visual means.
- 5 Social studies concepts describe the fundamental and enduring relationships between people in a society. These may include: society, culture, change, perspectives, rights, values, sovereignty, government, religion, laws, roles, responsibilities, community, diversity, and social justice.
- 6 Further information on social inquiry is included in [*The New Zealand Curriculum, Building Conceptual Understandings in the Social Sciences: Approaches to Social Inquiry*](#), Learning Media, Ministry of Education, 2009, and the *Teaching and Learning Guide for Senior Social Studies*.
- 7 Information about points of view, values, and perspectives can be found in the *Teaching and Learning Guide for Senior Social Studies*.
- 8 Conditions of Assessment related to this achievement standard can be found at <http://ncea.tki.org.nz/>.

Replacement Information

This achievement standard replaced AS90691 and AS90692.

Quality Assurance

- 1 Providers and Industry Training Organisations must have been granted consent to assess by NZQA before they can register credits from assessment against achievement standards.
- 2 Organisations with consent to assess and Industry Training Organisations assessing against achievement standards must engage with the moderation system that applies to those achievement standards.

Consent and Moderation Requirements (CMR) reference

0233

Achievement Standard**Subject Reference** Social Studies 3.5**Title** Examine a campaign of social action(s) to influence policy change(s)**Level** 3 **Credits** 4 **Assessment** Internal**Subfield** Social Science Studies**Domain** Social Studies**Status** Registered **Status date** September 2025**Planned review date** December 2028 **Date version published** December 2025

This achievement standard involves examining a campaign of social action(s) to influence policy change(s).

Achievement Criteria

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine a campaign of social action(s) to influence policy change(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine, in depth, a campaign of social action(s) to influence policy change(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine comprehensively a campaign of social action(s) to influence policy change(s).

Explanatory Notes

- This achievement standard is derived from the Social Studies achievement objectives from Level 8 of the Social Sciences learning area of *The New Zealand Curriculum*, Learning Media, Ministry of Education, 2007, and is related to material in the *Teaching and Learning Guide for Senior Social Studies*, Ministry of Education, 2010 at <http://seniorsecondary.tki.org.nz/>.

This standard is also derived from *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*. For details of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* achievement objectives to which this standard relates, see the [Papa Whakaako](#) for the relevant learning area.

- Examine a campaign of social action(s) to influence policy change(s)* involves using social studies concepts and giving specific evidence to:
 - explain the aims of the campaign and the desired policy change
 - explain the differing reasons for individuals' and/or groups' involvement in the campaign
 - explain the individuals' and/or groups' reasons for selecting the social action methods and how these methods intended to support the desired policy change.

- D] *Examine, in depth, a campaign of social action(s) to influence policy change(s)* involves exploration of the real and potential consequences of the campaign.

Examine comprehensively a campaign of social action(s) to influence policy change(s) involves critically evaluating the effectiveness of the campaign, including possible modifications which could have been made to improve the campaign's influence on policy.

- 3 Social studies concepts describe the fundamental and enduring relationships between people in a society. These may include: society, culture, change, perspectives, rights, values, sovereignty, government, religion, laws, roles, responsibilities, community, diversity, and social justice.
- 4 *A campaign of social action(s)* is a series of actions designed to bring about policy change(s). The actions may emerge and evolve as the campaign progresses. The actions may be centrally co-ordinated or distributed across networks.
- 5 Information about points of view, values, and perspectives may be found in the *Teaching and Learning Guide for Senior Social Studies*.
- 6 Conditions of Assessment related to this achievement standard can be found at <http://ncea.tki.org.nz/>.

Replacement Information

This achievement standard replaced AS90693.

Quality Assurance

- 1 Providers and Industry Training Organisations must have been granted consent to assess by NZQA before they can register credits from assessment against achievement standards.
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